

P 090841Z MAR 09
FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7078
INFO WHITE HOUSE WASHDC
USDOC WASHDC
AMEMBASSY BEIJING
AMCONSUL SHANGHAI
AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU
AIT TAIPEI 0219
CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI

UNCLAS HONG KONG 000430

DEPT FOR INR/R/MR, INR/IC/CD, I/FW
DEPT FOR EAP/PD, EAP/CM, EAP/P
DEPT FOR VOA/BRF, TV-WPA
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC
PRC POSTS FOR PA
AIT
USPACOM FOR FOR CIS PD ADVISER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: AFGHANISTAN; ICC ARREST WARRANT FOR
PRESIDENT OF SUDAN; U.S. ECONOMY

TOPICS:

- [1. Afghanistan](#)
- [2. ICC Arrest Warrant for President of Sudan](#)
- [3. U.S. economy](#)

HEADLINES AND EXCERPTS:

[1. Afghanistan](#)

"Obama is on mark with approach to Taliban"

The independent English-language South China Morning Post remarked in an editorial (3/9): "Afghanistan's problems are endemic and cannot be resolved by military force. Nor can they be dealt with by political pressure or money. Peace and stability are for the Afghan people to bring about. But if the Muslim extremism that is so rampant in parts of their country and neighboring Pakistan is to be contained, every effort has to be made by foreign governments to assuage the threat. U.S. President Barack Obama has the right approach. His suggestion that talks could be held with moderate elements of the country's former fundamentalist rulers, the Taliban, points to a more reasoned search for peace than that of his predecessor, George W. Bush.... The grip of Taliban extremism is tightening in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Drugs from Afghan fields are flooding across borders in record amounts. Foreign governments have a right to be concerned. But there needs to be a shift in attitude - and hopefully, Mr. Obama can properly articulate and enact it.... There are overriding rules to follow if the threat of extremism is to be lessened. At their heart must be an appreciation of the beliefs, culture and religion of those at the other side of the negotiating table. Through understanding can come trust and, perhaps, influence."

[2. ICC Arrest Warrant for President of Sudan](#)

"ICC does not help broker peace by issuing the arrest warrant for Sudan's President"

The independent Chinese-language Ming Pao Daily News had an editorial (3/8): "...Issuing the arrest warrant for Omar al-Bashir is of no benefit. ICC does not seem to have considered it thoroughly. China and Russia said that the ICC's decision will not lead to a peaceful solution to the Sudan issue. Russia also said that ICC's move has set a 'dangerous example'. Sudan's domestic economy has been improved and Sudan has basically paid all its foreign debts. If al-Bashir is arrested at this time, the anti-government armed forces in Darfur will become active. The Sudanese government will definitely resort to force. Sudanese people will, inevitably, be plunged into misery and suffering. Another humanitarian disaster may emerge. If this is the case, it will be an irony for the ICC which orders the arrest of al-Bashir on

the charge of crimes against humanity."

13. U.S. economy

"Guard against the 'Obama bear market' turning into the 'Obama depression'"

The independent Chinese-language Hong Kong Economic Times commented in an editorial (3/9): "U.S. Dow Jones Index has hit new low. Since President Obama took office, the Dow Jones Index has fallen 20 percent. Some analysts joke that it is the 'Obama bear market'. But people are more worried about the real economy. Since the unemployment rate is worsening rapidly, if Obama cannot restore people's confidence and curb the vicious cycle of the economy, the 'Obama depression' may occur.... Just as Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao has said, 'confidence is more important than gold.' If one has to restore the confidence, taking action 'earlier is better than later' and taking 'strong measures is better than weak.' Obama must give a powerful and quick punch before he can improve the economic situation. If Obama fails to stabilize public confidence, the economy will fall into a vicious cycle, resulting in a depression. Obama is facing a severe test and this will also be a severe test for the global economy."

DONOVAN